

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Illinois	
COUNTY: Cook	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME
COMMON
Chicago Public Library, Central Building
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER:
78 East Washington Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Chicago
STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17** COUNTY: **Cook** CODE: **031**

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District- <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Library</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
OWNER'S NAME:
City of Chicago
STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall, 121 N. LaSalle Street
CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Cook County Recorder of Deeds & Map Dept., Chicago City Hall
STREET AND NUMBER:
City Hall
CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey
DATE OF SURVEY: **August 1963** Federal State County Local
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress
STREET AND NUMBER:
CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **11**

7th Congressional District - Congressman: Frank Annunzio

STATE: **Illinois**
COUNTY: **Cook**

FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered *		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A late 19th century monumental public building with a very handsome neoclassical facade on three sides; a large solid stonemasonry edifice in a combination of historical styles. Its most distinctive features are the material, craftsmanship, and artistic design of the integral decoration of the monumental public spaces.

The south end entry hall embraces a grand marble staircase of massive proportions rising the height of the building. This and the adjoining third floor humanities room are extensively and intricately inlaid with colorful mosaic, cosmati, and polished stone.

Also of interest are the north staircase, the great reading rooms, and the GAR memorial Hall and anteroom. Rotundas in this room and the south end Humanities room feature large and elaborate Tiffany favrile glass domes.

Throughout the public spaces of the Library there are coffered ceilings with rich decoration in plaster relief, tooled or cast.

* So far as we are aware, none of the important decorative features of the Library have been altered. The two large Tiffany Domes have been shielded overhead with opaque roofing which does not allow skylighting as originally intended. (this can be corrected).

The exterior is completely original, without change (except for darkening from an urban environment). Inside, there has been minor alteration and adaptation of work spaces, and some windows have been modified to permit opening of small sections.

Condition of the Central Library Building is remarkably good and sound for a building of its age, with no visible deterioration.

Maintenance and repair have been satisfactory, thus keeping a consistently good appearance inside and out.

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	Illinois	
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ENTRY NUMBER		DATE

(Number all entries) No. 8. - Statement of Significance, cont.

commission was by J. L. Holzer, a Tiffany associate who apparently started the work under the aegis of Tiffany, but became independent in 1896. These priceless artistic features would be difficult to remove and relocate, and would be essentially meaningless if taken out of their present context. The Grand staircase, of white Carrara statuary marble (with its mosaic inlays) angles and curves rising to the top of the building, and a sight of monumental grandeur that cannot fail to impress the viewer.

As stated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Library "embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type inherently valuable for a study of a period of construction." It represents the prevailing taste of its era, and is one of very few such monumental public buildings remaining in this part of the United States, and the only one substantially unaltered by remodeling. As such, it is an excellent candidate for landmarks status.

The Central Library is a product of Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, a Boston architectural firm of international prestige and reputation which also designed the Art Institute. Chief design credit is with C.A. Coolidge, of the firm's Chicago Branch, and one of the foremost designers of the academic school in monumental American Buildings.

Foundation engineering was by Gen. William Sooy Smith, historically important as a Civil War bridge engineer, and represented a significant architectural innovation. Smith successfully tackled the problem of supporting massive buildings on Chicago's great depth of mud and clay through the use of deep-driven log piles. Under the Library, Smith employed the first known use of load-testing prior to supporting the building. This technique was eminently successful, in that to this day there has been no appreciable settling of the structure.

The Library Building, by virtue of an agreement with the Grand Army of the Republic at the time of its construction, houses a museum of Civil War memorabilia in a monumental room on the second floor, north end. This museum is unique now in that it is the only war memorial left in Chicago (other than statuary) that is maintained in a City facility.

The land on which the Library stands is the site of the house of Chicago's second civilian, Jean Baptiste Beaubien, who built there in 1817. In 1837-39 the plat was dedicated to public use by the federal government as "Dearborn Park". It was the subject of a dispute when, prior to 1889 the decision was made to allow the public library to build there.

With its irreplaceable, unique and artistic assets, and its place in the history of mid-America, the Central Library Building is clearly a national treasure which is deserving of recognition as a landmark in the National Register of Historic Places.

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **constructed 1895-97**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Philosophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Italian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Central Building of the Chicago Public Library is a "landmark" in the sense that it is a distinctive historical building in a metropolitan commercial area and in a conspicuous site. It is located at the northeast corner of Grant Park, Chicago's famous downtown lakefront park which forms a "cultural center" for the city, being circumscribed by some of the city's most notable cultural institutions: the Field Museum, the Shedd Aquarium, the Adler Planetarium, Roosevelt University, the Fine Arts Building, Orchestra Hall, and the world famed Art Institute of Chicago. The Library is the northernmost of these cultural assets. It is one of the great public libraries built in the late 19th century, and is comparable to the great New York and Boston libraries of the same period.

The Library building is an important and historic aspect of the famous skyline of Michigan Avenue. It is one of the oldest remaining structures on the Avenue, and being of low profile forms a welcome relief and a needed horizontal foil to the predominantly vertical aspect of the wall of buildings west of Grant Park. It fits the scene appropriately, and is historic in that it was the first permanent home of the Chicago Public Library and has since served 75 years as the main library building in Chicago.

The Library is a landmark in that it is old, monumental, familiar, beautiful and beloved, and it is of immeasurable sentimental value to the citizens of Chicago and to visitors from everywhere who have used the building and have admired its magnificent artistic assets. Its qualities of beauty, craftsmanship, and artistry equal those of the finest monumental buildings abroad which American citizens travel thousands of miles to see.

There is national significance in the unique, elegant, and irreplaceable mosaic and glasswork by the famed House of Tiffany, and its associates. These remarkable and exciting artistic displays adorn the south end Grand Staircase, Humanities Room, and north end rotunda. The elaborate mosaic and cosmati has been described as "the largest and finest system of mosaics in the modern world."

Basic design concept of the mosaics is attributed to Robert C. Spencer, an early associate of Frank Lloyd Wright. Execution of the great

S E E I N S T R U C T I O N S

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

The Inland Architect, January, 1898 (a 52 page supplement, Illustrated describing the completed Library building.

Randall, Frank A., History of Chicago Building, Urbana, The University of Illinois Press, 1949, p. 19.

"The Chicago Public Library Central Building", undated visitors' guide.

Kirkland, Joseph & Caroline, The Story of Chicago. Chicago, Dibble Publishing Co., 1894, Vol. II, pp 254-257.

Staples, Charles G., The Chicago Public Library Central Bldg. A History.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES							
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE					
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	41°	53'	02"	87°	37'	30"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"						
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"						

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **One acre**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Charles G. Staples, Secretary**

ORGANIZATION: **Chicago Heritage Committee** DATE: **March 10, '72**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1030 East 50th Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Chicago** STATE: **Illinois** CODE: **17**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name _____

Title _____

Date _____

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST: _____

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

ILLINOIS HISTORIC SITES SURVEY INVENTORY

CK-H-
✓ 2070

1. Name of Site:

Common Chicago Public Library

Historic

2. Location:

Street and Number 73 E. Washington
(cor. Michigan)

Township

Section

City or Town Chicago

Zip Code

Range

1/4 Section

County Cook

3. Classification:

Category (check one)

Integrity (check one)

District Building
 Site Structure

Altered Unaltered
 Moved Original Site

4. Ownership:

Status (check one)

Private
 Public

Occupied
 Unoccupied
 Preservation work in progress

Access to Public

Yes Restricted Unrestricted No

Present Use (check one or more)

Agricultural Industrial Religious
 Commercial Military Scientific
 Educational Museum Transportation
 Entertainment Park Other
 Government Private Residence

5. Ownership of Property:

Owner's Name

Phone Number

Street and Number

City or Town

State

County

Zip Code

6. Description:

Excellent Good Fair Deteriorated
 Ruins Unexposed

Is there a program of preservation underway? Yes No

REPOSITORY

7. Historical Themes: (check one or more of the following)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Site | (Pre-Columbian) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological Site | (Post-Columbian to 1673) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> French Influence | (1673-1780) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Frontier | (1780-1818) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Early | (1818-1850) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Illinois Middle | (1850-1900) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Illinois Late | (1900-present) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous People | (give names & dates) |

8. Specific Date: 1893

Areas of significance (check one or more of the following)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal (pre-historic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Music |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Political |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | |

Brief statement of significance: (include all names and dates)

Use additional sheets if necessary. National Register

9. Form prepared by:

Name and Title: _____ Date: 6/24/75

Organization: _____ Phone: _____

Street and Number: _____

City or Town: _____ County: _____ Zip Code: _____

During the course of the Survey we often find it necessary to search for a particular site. When filling out the Survey form, please list according to the following example, published references to the site for which forms are being completed. If a bibliography can be compiled, it will greatly deduct from the Survey's task.

Bibliography

Robertson, Robert, Of Whales and Men. New York, Alfred K. Knopf, Inc., 1954.

National Register material

